

A Place For Mom

I discovered a website designed to help families find the appropriate care setting for their aging parents and loved ones. The name of the site is A Place for Mom. My mom will need respite care in the near future since her caregiver, my sister, will be taking a much needed vacation out of the country later this summer. Since none of the rest of the family has the ability or the space to care for our mother, I decided to investigate facilities that provide care for a short duration. I filled out the information required on the website and received a return phone call later in the day. The counselor was a very compassionate person, knowledgeable about issues facing older adults and discreet about asking questions that would help us in identifying a facility that could provide mom with the resources she requires.

As we spoke, the counselor suggested three or four organizations near my home that met the qualifications that were important to me. For example, mom would prefer a religiously oriented, preferably Roman Catholic facility, where she could pray the rosary and attend Mass regularly. She would also like a place that was attuned to her profound hearing loss and her inability to walk independently. I agreed on three or four possible choices and was told by the counselor that he would notify these places of my potential interest and that they would contact me personally. In one case, he even booked a tour for me at a facility that he assured me was probably the best option for us.

One of the facilities called me back within hours, answered all my questions to my satisfaction and arranged for a personal visit for me to tour the community. Later in the week I spent some time visiting this location and was very impressed with the caring staff, the tastefully appointed décor and the desire on behalf of the staff to care for my mother during this short-term stay.

The care center that was highly recommended turned out to be less than satisfactory. I arrived on time for my appointment and was never greeted nor acknowledged by the receptionist who was on the telephone engaging in a personal conversation. I noticed that the resident dining room was positioned by the front door, giving me full view of people eating breakfast and being attended by the staff. While it was great to see what was going on at the meal, the design didn't afford the residents the dignity and privacy they deserved. After a few more minutes of inattention by the receptionist, I got up and left the facility figuring that my mother would deserve better attention than what I received.

Using A Place for Mom was very helpful. I did my homework and got first-hand experience by visiting a number of care facilities. I'm now able to decide where I'd like mom to reside during this respite stay. Now I have the more daunting task of convincing her that this is in her best interests. Stay tuned.